

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

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**Date:** 3/2/2011

## Turkey

**Post:** Ankara

### **FAS Ankara Assists U.S. Planting Seed Exporter**

**Report Categories:**

Export Accomplishments - Other

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**Report Highlights:**

FAS Ankara helped get a shipment of planting seeds released from customs worth approximately \$32,000

**General Information:**

When a shipment of U.S. planting seeds from California was stopped at Customs in February due to questions about certificates, FAS Ankara intervened and eventually was able to get the shipment released after an official letter and discussions with officials at the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

First the port official demanded a copy of the phytosanitary certificate with a wet seal from APHIS. After this was provided the official voiced concerns that the signatures on the seal and the original certificate were from different people, so FAS Ankara checked with APHIS to make sure the signatures were authentic and once this was confirmed, we wrote a letter to the Agriculture Ministry headquarters verifying that both signatures were authentic. After the official then expressed concerns that instead of signatures there were only initials. We explained that in the United States handwritten initials are a legal way to sign documents. Apparently this is different in Turkey, but given our earlier official letter guaranteeing the authenticity of the certificates and then our later explanation of the U.S. system, they released the shipment, worth approximately \$32,000.

Certification issues occur often in Turkey. Sometimes they occur because of intentional attempts at harassing imports, sometimes they are a result of sincere misunderstandings due to language problems or differences between our systems, and other times they are a result of improper paperwork or misunderstanding of Turkish regulations. Either way, U.S. exporters should contact FAS Ankara whenever they experience problems getting agricultural items into Turkey, because we are in a unique position to help based on our specialized multilingual staff, our understanding of local regulations and our network of close contacts with key officials in the host government.